

Acton District Commission
Meeting March 8, 2011
Minutes

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Meeting was called to order by Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB) at 7:30.

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Also present were Pam Lynn (PL), Maya Minkin (MMk), David Honn (DH), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG) Board of Selectmen liaison.

Minutes of February 8, 2011 and February 10, 2011 were approved by consent unanimously.

7:40 FAR There are two proposed warrant articles having to do with Floor Area Ratio presented by the Planning Department that were discussed at a public hearing on March 1, 2011. The articles sought to revise the Floor Area Ratio values for South Acton Village from .2 to .4 and for West Acton Village from .4 to .7. The second of the two articles sought to revise the density bonus is each of the two villages. After much input from the HDC and others the Planning Board voted to withdraw the two from the Warrant prior to going to print.

Burning Issue to be presented on 3/9 by Acton 20-20. Subject: Transportation from 7-9:30 in Room 204.

Burning Issue to be presented on 3/12 by Acton 20-20. Subject: Housing 2-4:30 PM in Room 204.

Acton citizens are invited to post blog opinions and feedback. Former questions were ambiguous and needed clarification.

7:45 South Acton Train Station: The second meeting of the T and Acton representatives met on March 4, 2011. DH and AR met with the T and Phil Brake Friday morning. The proceedings were remarkably polite and cordial. The T's architect parroted back the principles enunciated three months ago. However the participants are moving in a good direction. The south side tower will be less prominent than the north side. The revised plans include more canopy and less glass. The T has proposed the use of stainless steel as cladding in place of the preferred Rhinezink. Cost is an issue. DH and AR objected to the use of ribbed cladding as it looked too industrial. Rigidity is a factor. There is very little exterior wall left, as little as 1000-2000 square feet. Rhinezink needs to be priced to see how much more expensive it would be over other propose alternatives.

KAB seeking opinions from members. PL more visibility is appealing. Rhinezink is more appealing than the alternatives. MM Hardiplank is still an option as base for Rhinezink. DH Rhinezink looks great and has a high fireproof rating. The ribbed stainless steel looks too industrial. MMk The windows over the entrance ways are still a work in progress. There is still too much glass. The windows aqs depicted in the drawing detract from the entryway. Prefers Rhinezink. KAB The windows are the next area of focus. We have come a long way. Thanks to DH, RR and AR for the tiem and effort put in. Thanks to Phil Brake the negotiations are going well. Rhinezink is still the best choice. With it the scale works. Glass and windows still need to be addressed.

DH There is work being done on the site plan. There needs to be a presence created at the train station. There is no public space in which to create a monument. Have Holly Ben Joseph look at the plans when they are finally completed. Also seek input from Mike Van Valkenberg to review the plans for suggestions. Consult with Corey York as well.

8:00 Jason Hanson 282 Central Street Application #1103 for sign for acupuncture office in West Acton Village Historic District. JH brought several sample designs for consideration. PL liked the middle of three designs. The initial design is too jarring. MM The sign will be 2 feet wide by 4 feet long. Prefers an outline similar to that on the Mark Burrell sign positioned above the locus of the Henson sign. Likes the first proposed sign. Likes the readability of the first proposed sign. DH likes sample #2 with border. Shrink the words to permit more white space. This helps readability. MMk likes sample #2. Also likes the original design; most attractive. Likes the use of lower case with border. DB likes the original with border. KAB likes sample #1 but finds the original design acceptable. The parentheses around the area code of the telephone number to be removed. DH Remember the use of thirds in designing the sign.

Moved and seconded to accept sign with following conditions and recommendations: The sign will be made of 2' by 4' piece of wood; painted white with block lettering; remove parentheses from telephone number area code and replace with dash; employ the rule of thirds in the placement of each line; increase the white space by using a small font and keep it consistent with the "Mark Burrell" sign placed above it. Voted unanimously to approve application with stated conditions. Applicant to bring the certificate of applicability to zoning enforcement officer for further approval. The free standing sign must be removed once the above sign is put up.

8:30 Barbara Nyberg 481 Main Street Application #1102 for historic maker plaque. The plaque containing the date 1821 will be placed where former sign was placed. It will be centered in the space between the corner board of the right side of applicant's house (facing house) and the right edge of the shutters and equidistant between the first and second floor window shutters. PL Location is acceptable. MM There is no confusion regarding the address. DH The location is consistent with other plaque placements. The visibility is acceptable. KAB There are other places that are acceptable for plaque locations such as next to the front door. Proposed location is acceptable. MMk The plaque location is acceptable. KAB The application has not been officially filed. Notice came from HC. Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued when official application is filed.

On motion duly seconded it was voted to approve the application for an Historic Commission Marker Plaque including the date "1821" with the following conditions: Marker to be displayed on the right side (facing building) of the owner's house between the last shutter and the corner of the house; size of sign to be 12" X 16"; positioned centered between the first floor window and second floor window; painted white; black lettering; standard Historic Commission font.

9:00 586 Mass. Application no. 1104 Wants to remove the murals and replace the entry door with one that conforms to ADA standards. PL A single pair of verticals still there. MM No problem with loss of panels. It will mean a lot more glass than adjacent buildings. No transom lighting. DH Lots of stores in West Concord have large areas of glass as a part of the façade. The fluorescent lights will be straightened out. MM Can the corner post be made thicker to match the

other verticals? DH Not bothered by the thin vertical corner. MMk The intent is to widen the double doors. Can they be made of wood? Clean up the signage, pillars and glass if the door is approved. Owner Plans to bring the store front up to a baseline and let tenant make and changes to enhance curb appeal. MMk Can you paint aluminum. Use gooseneck lights in place of fluorescent. Finds increased glass area acceptable. KAB Replace the sagging lights to enhance curb appeal. Will not mind seeing murals go. The doors are not a main feature. DH Line the front of the building up with the rest of the building's storefronts. Add another mullion to help the façade and improve signage. MM Recommend look for improvement in looks of whole front is lined up. It would help with signage. Refer owner to Scott Mutch just as a precaution. AR Pull transom line across. Owner That would be expensive.

Moved and seconded to allow removal of the murals at 586 Mass. Ave. The words "West Acton Market" must be removed. Door can be replaced with an aluminum or metal framed glass door to match the color of the building as currently painted. Have the door painted at the factory. Match the color of window mullion. Verticals will be metal, full height of door with duplicate door as that on 578 Mass. Ave. The vertical members are wood, gray in color with the same color all across the front.

DH Aluminum door frame can be white or black, and painted at the factory. Suggest a color to match the surrounding frame. MMk Widen the corner molding. KAB Aluminum is acceptable. Make the corner thicker. Use gooseneck lighting in place of the sagging fluorescent lights. PL Use a lighter door to perpetuate the line.

Motion restated: Moved and seconded to approve the removal of the murals; replace door with a unit that matches the door at 578 Mass. Ave.; recommend that the door frame be painted at the factory to match the color of the surrounding storefront; recommend widening the corner trim at the window corner by the entrance to match the other uprights; recommend continuing the line from the transom window through the first two pairs of glass; replace the lighting with something more compatible; refer to the lighting scheme at the art building at 537-540 Mass. Ave. Remove the words "West Acton Market" from the store front. This is subject to abutters' notification. Passed unanimously.

9:35 After one minute recess: WAVE On 6/26/09 HDC approved the concept plan for WAVE and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness and where applicable, a Certificate of Non-applicability. Phase I the "Yellow House" was begun. Subject for discussion was the signage placement and the extension for Phase II for another year. Can a CoA be extended for more than one year?. The year's extension terminates on 6/26/11. If no work has been started on Phase II the CoA will expire.

First topic to be discussed is the signage on the Yellow House. Reference is to Plan A, of Plan no. 4.01 0521. The signs are to be made of wood. Lighting of Secondary signage: Is it possible to have signs in two places, front and side of building? One is a main sign and the other a directory sign. The second sign would be in the back and not in our jurisdiction. MMK Signs as depicted in the plans are too close to the window. They should be made smaller. Other examples have never been seen on other historic buildings. Concealed lighting is not visible in daytime. KAB As for examples elsewhere on soffit. MMk Lighting could be wired. DH The signage is acceptable. It is traditional. Soffit lighting is wrong. Compare with other lighting in West Acton. Use lights in

windows or use porch lights. Use of projecting signs is allowed. Change the location of projecting signs to corner. Concealed soffit lighting in the yellow house does not follow rules. KAB MR needs to follow up with Scott Mutch regarding signage. Suggest use of a free standing sign if allowed. KAB to check on this. There may be insufficient space. Tenant signs are not meant to slide out. Specify that they should hang on hooks what was approved as to door shapes. Yellow House, actually the porch hanging detail lighting is too modern. PL Ladder sign sticks out Switch signs in front of small section. MM Put ladder sign in center section. It could be a lawn sign. The lighting is not appropriate. DH Has never seen concealed lighting like what is proposed. AR Signage and lighting are issues to be discussed with the Rosenfelds. The ladder sign should be closer to the corner board. CK Different shapes Why size for signs on left vs. size of ladder signs. The lighting is wrong.

Next meeting with Mike and Matthias Rosenfeld is March 22, 2011 at 8PM. What about the expiration of the CoA?

9:45 Can't extend the CoA without a change of rules and regulations. Can't give an extension. WAVE has until June 26, 2011 to submit complete design and flesh out a concept design. They must go to the building department and get their building and other permits before June 26, 2011. WAVE will have to come back to us. KAB will give them a heads up.

40B Demolition at 111-113 School Street. The house is a shingle style house from the 19th century. There is a barn on the same lot. The owner of the building is applying for a 40B. The current house has 4 units. The new construction would have 4 houses each with 2 units.

MM Talked to Mass. Housing to try to do something to preserve the current house. It is a contributing structure. There is a strong case with Mass Housing. This is the only shingle style house in Acton. Do we as a commission write a preemptive letter regarding the policy against demolition of buildings for any reason. Also recommend that the house be reused for housing and also recommend that these buildings not be demolished. Identify the house as owned by a station master. TF It is to our benefit to be proactive. It reduces the developer's argument of benefiting the low income housing. We need to write a letter with a copy to the Board of Selectmen, developer and Planning Department. AR to write a letter for March 22.

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted



David Barrat,
Secretary